

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 00153 101117Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----105035 101118Z /23  
O 101102Z JAN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6037

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 0153

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, TW  
SUBJECT: CCK AS PRESIDENT -- IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S.

1. PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO'S DECISION TO MOVE UP TO THE PRESIDENCY SEEMS MOTIVATED BY TWO PERCEIVED NEEDS: A) TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF UNITY ON TAIWAN IN THE MIDST OF THE NOVEMBER KMT ELECTION DEFEATS AND THE NEAR RIOT IN CHUNGLI AND B) TO GIVE CCK GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN DEALING WITH THE NEW POLITICAL STIRRINGS ON THE ISLAND AND MORE AUTHORITY AS WELL AS FLEXIBILITY IN DEALING WITH PROBLEMS TAIWAN WIL FACE IN COPING WITH NORMALIZATION.

2. CCK ENJOYS WIDE POPULARITY WITH THE TAIWANESE INCLUDING THE "INDEPENDENTS" WHO OPPOSE THE KMT. BY MOVING UP TO THE PRESIDENCY CCK BECOMES LEADER OF ALL THE PEOPLE AND GAINS THE CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS HE NOW EXERCISES BUT ONLY BY DELEGATION FROM THE PRESIDENT. HE WILL THEREFORE KEEP OPEN HIS OPTIONS TO RESPOND TO POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS ON TAIWAN AND TO ACTIONS THE UNITED STATES MIGHT TAKE AS HE BELIEVES THE NATIONAL INTEREST REQUIRES WITH LESS CONCERN THAT INFLUENTIAL ELEMENTS IN THE KMT COULD SUCCESSFULLY OPPOSE HIM. WRAPPING HIMSELF IN HIS FATHER'S MANTLE WILL ALSO ASSIST HIM IN DEALING WITH KMT OLD GUARD.

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3. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES HE WILL CHOOSE TO EXERCISE THE FLEXIBILITY IN WAYS HELPFUL TO OUR EFFORTS TO MOVE TOWARD NORMALIZATION ALTHOUGH WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE HE WILL WISH TO WORK WITH US ONCE HE ACCEPTS THAT NORMALIZATION IS INEVITABLE. IN ANY CASE WE WILL HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF CONVINCING CCK TO ADOPT REASONABLE POLICIES ONCE HE IS IN A POSITION OF UNCHALLENGED LEADERSHIP AND CAN,

IF NECESSARY, APPEAL OVER THE HEADS OF HIS KMT ADVISERS.

4. GIVEN THE UNDOUBTED TRUST AND POPULARITY HE ENJOYS AMONG THE TAIWANESE, WE ALSO BELIEVE IT LIKELY THAT THE NON-PARTY TAIWANESE WILL BE INCLINED TO GIVE CCK THEIR SUPPORT ON BASIC NATIONAL ISSUES THEREBY COOLING SPECULATION THAT TAIWANESE FRUSTRATION MIGHT LEAD TO FORMING A NEW POLITICAL PARTY WITH CENTRAL PURPOSE OF MOVING TOWARD SOME FORM OF SELF-DETERMINATION. HOW LONG CCK'S HONEYMOON AS PRESIDENT WILL LAST, HOWEVER, WILL DEPEND ON HOW FAR HE IS PREPARED TO GO IN NAMING TAIWANESE TO IMPORTANT POSITIONS AND IN MODERATING THE RETURN TO MAINLAND RHETORIC. THE FIRST TEST WILL BE WHETHER HE IS BOLD ENOUGH TO NAME A TAIWANESE AS VICE PRESIDENT.  
UNGER

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESIDENT  
**Control Number:** n/a  
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**Draft Date:** 10 jan 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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